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Break the Silence

Report Elder Abuse



Illinois Department
on Aging

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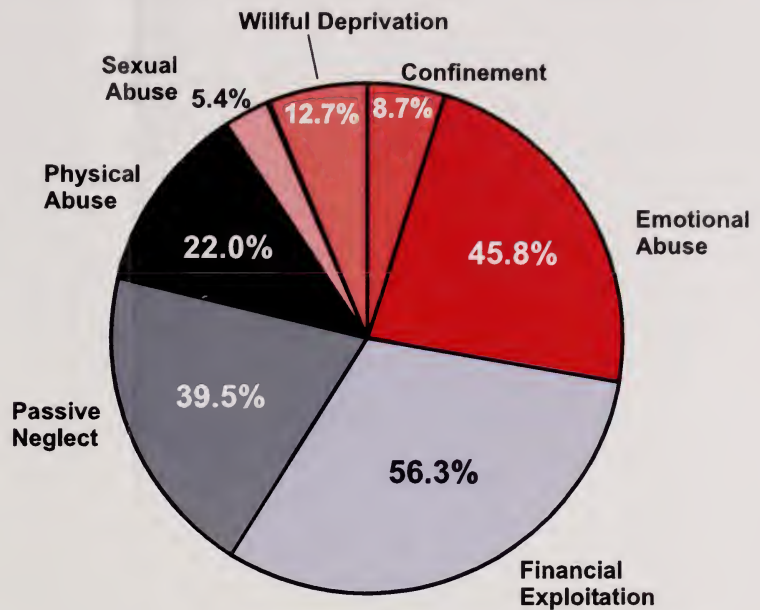
Do I know what Elder Abuse is?

Elder abuse is a term referring to any negligent act by a caregiver or any other adult that causes harm or a serious risk of harm to a vulnerable adult. Illinois law defines abuse, neglect and exploitation as:

- ▶ **Physical abuse** — inflicting physical pain or injury upon an older adult.
 - ▶ **Sexual abuse** — touching, fondling, intercourse, or any other sexual activity with an older adult, when the older adult is unable to understand, unwilling to consent, threatened or physically forced.
 - ▶ **Emotional abuse** — verbal assaults, threats of abuse, harassment or intimidation.
 - ▶ **Confinement** — restraining or isolating an older adult, other than for medical reasons.
 - ▶ **Passive neglect** — the caregiver's failure to provide an older adult with life's necessities, including, but not limited to, food, clothing, shelter or medical care.
 - ▶ **Willful deprivation** — willfully denying an older adult medication, medical care, shelter, food, a therapeutic device or other physical assistance, and thereby exposing that adult to the risk of physical, mental, or emotional harm — except when the older adult has expressed an intent to forego such care.
 - ▶ **Financial exploitation** — the misuse or withholding of an older adult's resources by another, to the disadvantage of the older adult or the profit or advantage of someone else.
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What else do I need to know?

- ▶ **Elder abuse does not discriminate.** Elder abuse can affect people of all ethnic backgrounds and social status and can affect both men and women. An elder abuse victim may be your neighbor, friend or family member. It is estimated that only one in every seven cases of elder abuse is reported.
- ▶ **We must all do our part to report elder abuse.** In FY 2008, more than 10,000 reports of elder abuse were made in Illinois. These reports are helping to break the silence of elder abuse.
- ▶ **Your report can make a difference.** Reporting elder abuse gives victims the opportunity to receive the help they need to stop the abuse, and can reduce their risk of abuse in the future.



"Types of Elder Abuse Reported" from FY 2008 data.

What should I do if I suspect Elder Abuse?

Report.

- ▶ **Voluntary Reporters.** Any person can voluntarily report. By law, anyone making an elder abuse report in good faith has civil and criminal immunity from liability and professional disciplinary action.
- ▶ **Mandated Reporters.** Certain professionals are required by law to report suspected abuse, neglect and exploitation of persons age 60 years and over who live in the community and "because of dysfunction are unable to report for themselves." Among those required to report suspected abuse are: doctors, nurses, psychologists, dentists, social service workers and law enforcement personnel.

No matter who reports, the identity of the reporter is **not** disclosed without the written permission of the reporter or by order of a court.

How can I break the silence?

Anyone who suspects that an older adult is being mistreated by someone should call:

► The Department on Aging's 24-Hour
Elder Abuse Hotline:
1-866-800-1409

1-888-206-1327 (TTY)

Elder Abuse and Neglect Program services are provided through local community agencies. Reports may also be made directly to the elder abuse provider agency where the older adult resides. For local information visit: **www.state.il.us/aging/1directory/elder_abuse.pdf**

Confidential

All reports are kept confidential, and anonymous reports are accepted.



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State of Illinois Department on Aging

421 E. Capitol Avenue, # 100
Springfield, Illinois 62701-1789

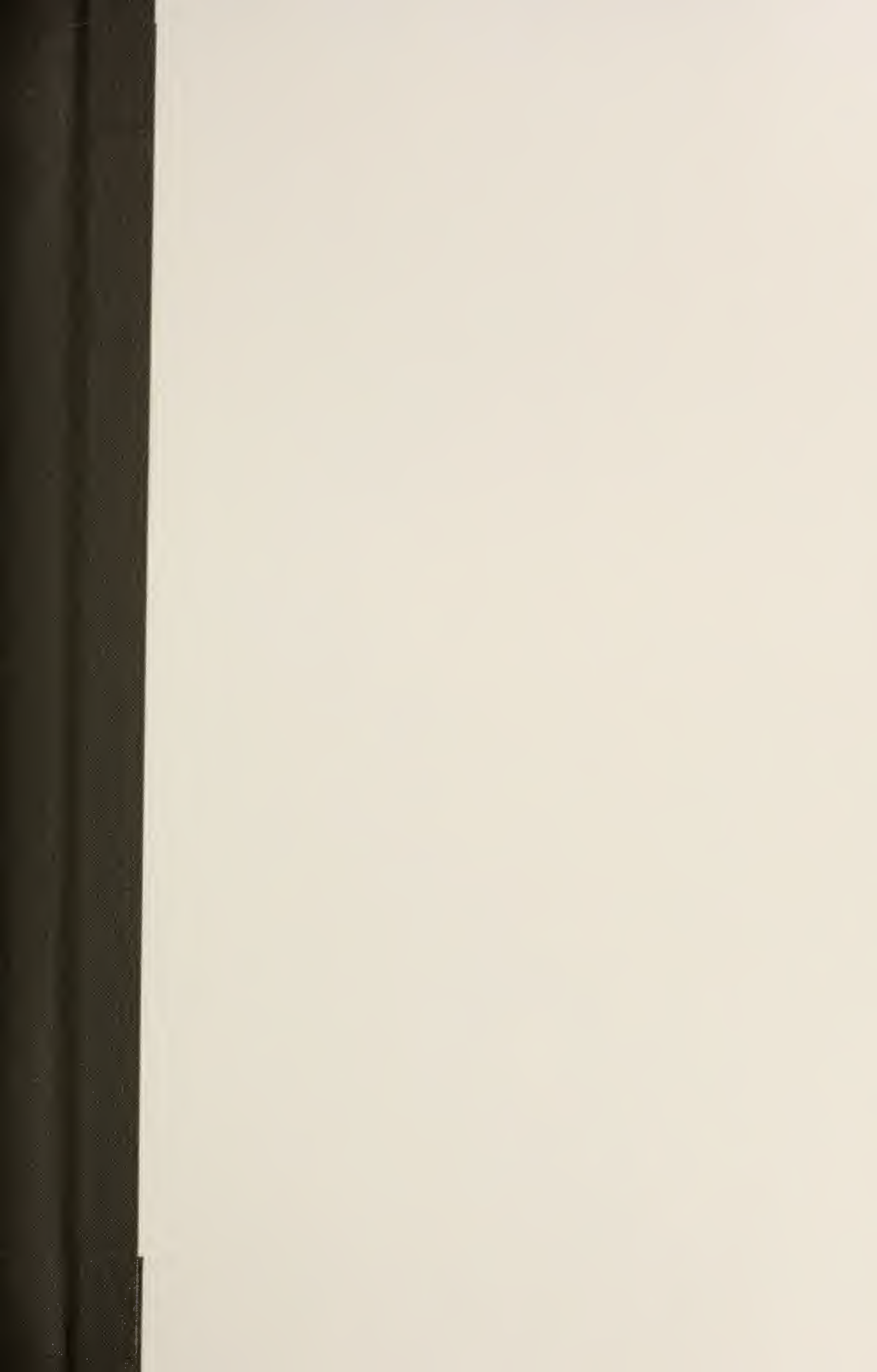
Senior HelpLine:

1-800-252-8966, 1-888-206-1327 (TTY)

www.state.il.us/aging

The Illinois Department on Aging does not discriminate in admission to programs or treatment of employment in programs or activities in compliance with appropriate State and Federal statutes. If you feel you have been discriminated against, call the Senior HelpLine at 1-800-252-8966, 1-888-206-1327 (TTY).

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